

Customer-Centered Approach

Over the past five years, Ex-Im Bank's authorizations surged by almost 150 percent. At the same time, however, funding constraints limited additional hiring and the Bank's ability to maintain a strong, modern technological infrastructure. These limitations made it difficult to implement contemporary customer-focused service innovations.



That situation changed in FY 2012. With an increase in the Bank's administrative budget approved through the congressional appropriations process, the Bank launched an unprecedented operational and technological modernization to be more customer-oriented and operationally efficient. A new, three-pronged "Total Enterprise Modernization" (TEM) plan focused on modernizing systems infrastructures, improving outdated business processes and engaging with customers in new and improved ways. The TEM initiative is transforming Ex-Im Bank into a more modern, flexible and responsive institution, with the customer at the center of our efforts.

Over the next three to five years, Ex-Im Bank will continue to implement innovations that focus on the customer, cut red tape, upgrade technology and enhance portfolio monitoring and management. A number of accomplishments from 2012 are listed as follows.

Focusing on Customers. Working with the White House Office of Management and Budget, Ex-Im Bank is studying customer-service strategies of pioneering companies in the private sector. To bring focus and proper implementation to the Bank's efforts, it has hired a vice president of customer experience, located in the Office of the Chairman.

Cutting Red Tape. In a review of transportation-industry transactions, Ex-Im Bank found that the application process required more than 200 discrete steps to complete. By eliminating redundant steps, the Bank has been able to streamline at least 25 percent of the previously required paperwork.

Similar improvements have been made to delivering short-term working capital loans to creditworthy small businesses. Through the Global Credit Express program, Ex-Im Bank is now providing these customers with direct loans that offer efficient processing, quicker turnaround on applications and streamlined reporting requirements. Similar process improvements have made the Bank's innovative Express Insurance a success with small businesses. With cost-effective pricing, quick response times and a streamlined application process, Express Insurance is helping small businesses compete with global suppliers, add foreign buyers and extend more attractive payment terms. (See 'Government at the Speed of Business' on page 12.)

Upgrading Technology. Through Ex-Im's Web site, www.exim.gov, the Bank is providing its customers with information that makes it easy to participate in webinars about Ex-Im products, register online for Bank events, contact Ex-Im regional offices and provide feedback directly to the Bank. Ex-Im Bank has also assisted in the creation of BusinessUSA, a centralized, one-stop government Web site for American businesses that President Obama announced in January 2012.

Enhancing Portfolio Monitoring and Management. In light of various changes in the financial markets, Ex-Im Bank has strengthened its reserves against losses and increased monitoring of its default rate, which remains well below the default rates of commercial banks. These enhancements ensure that the Bank will remain a prudent steward of taxpayer resources and will serve as a reliable support for U.S. exporters for years to come.